

Appl. No. 10/676,551
Amtd. Dated August 10, 2006
Reply to Office Action of June 29, 2006

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REMARKS

Initially, Applicant's attorney wishes to thank Examiner Elve for her courtesy in granting a recent interview during which there were discussed the significant aspects of the present invention and the distinctions over the prior art.

Essentially, the present invention is a machine tool with a unique unloading unit to lift the parts and skeleton from the work support and transport them to a discharge station. The unloading unit utilizes a pair of fork assemblies which are movable between open and closed positions. In the closed position, the fork assemblies can be moved upwardly through the grid of the support to lift the parts and skeleton therefrom and thereafter to carry the parts and skeleton to a discharge position. To allow the inner fork assembly to move outwardly of the workpiece support, the rear wall of the machine frame has recesses therein to which the ends of the one fork assembly can be moved to provide the open position thereof.

None of the prior art discloses or suggests such a machine tool installation. Fujita et al Patent No. 5,109,148 discloses a laser cutting machine which has a cutting head which is movable in the Y axis, but the workpiece support is movable in the X axis. It certainly does not disclose an unloading unit of the type defined in the claims of the present application, and in particular, a pair of opposing fork assemblies one of which is movable into a recess in the frame.

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Puozzo et al Patent No. 4,851,637 does not cure the deficiencies of Fujita. Again, there is no unloading assembly of the type referred to in the claims of the present application, and certainly none having a pair of opposed fork assemblies one of which is movable into a recess in the frame.

Serruys Patent No. 6,046,428 does have a fork assembly which is utilized for loading and unloading a laser cutting machine, but it has only a single fork assembly rather than opposed fork assemblies as in Applicant's claims and certainly there is no suggestion of moving a fork assembly into a recess in the machine frame.

Thus, the prior art certainly does not disclose the subject matter of claimed invention or provide a roadmap for the considerable reconstruction that would be required to provide the present invention.

In reviewing the application, it was noted that the legends 4a and 4b were reversed. Replacement drawings are being submitted herewith.

In view of the amendments to claims and the foregoing arguments, it is respectfully submitted that the amended claims are clearly allowable and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX

Replacement drawings Figures 4a and 4b are attached. The figure numbers have been reversed.